SEPTEMBER 1999

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS in California

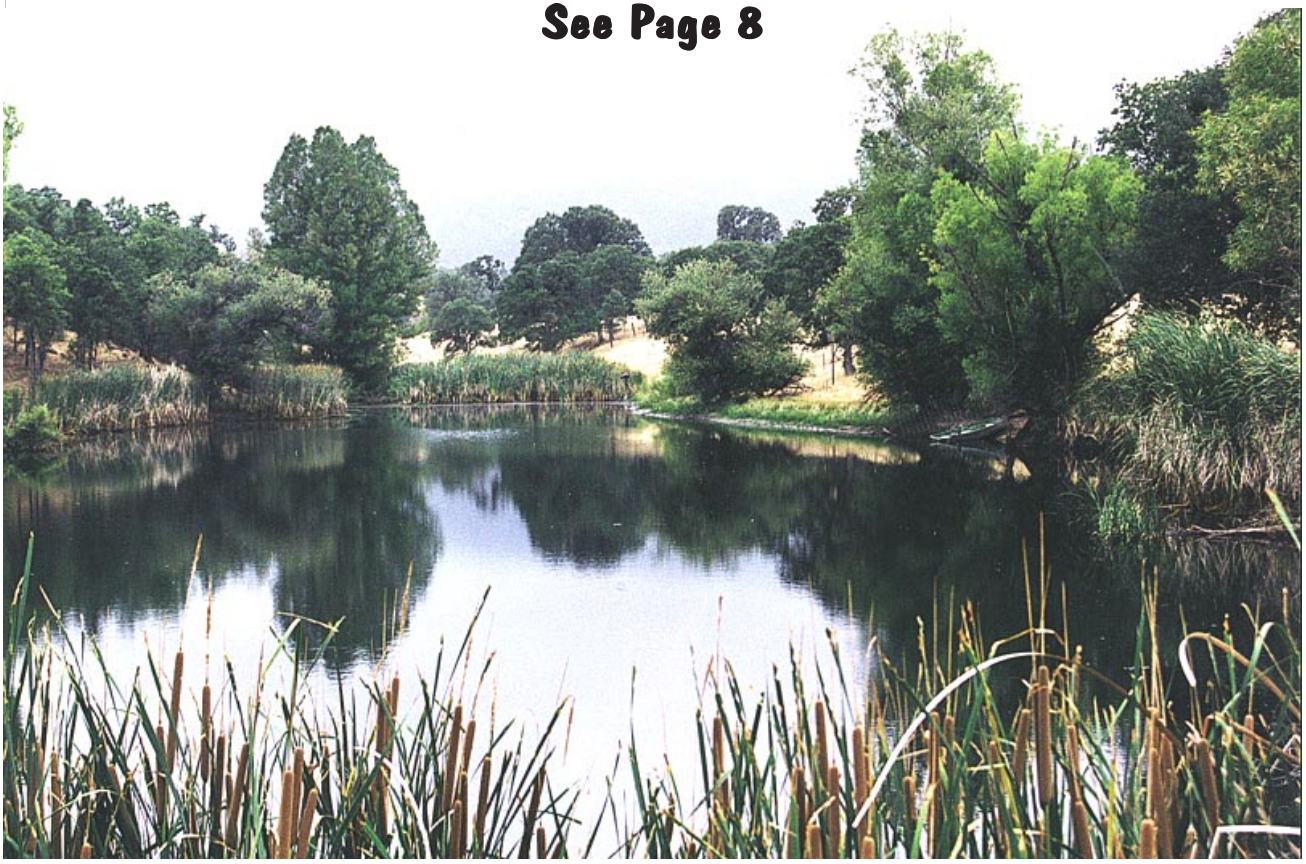
United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Davis, California

Biggest Issue in a While!

STREAM CORRIDOR RESTORATION

is Just One of the State Initiatives Covered in this Issue!

See Page 8

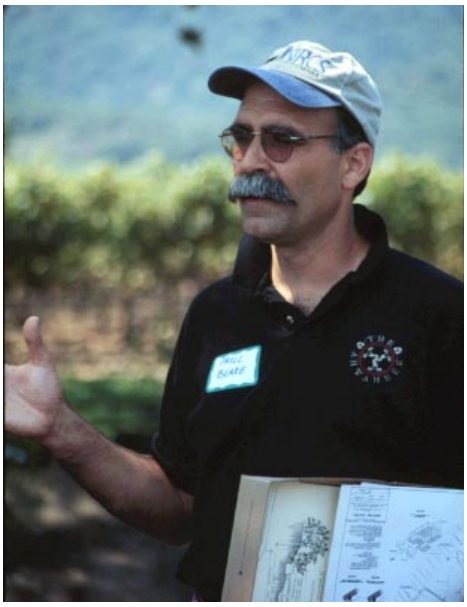


CONTENTS

Photosphere

Colusa County RCD Director **Gary Evans** (center) explains the benefits of understory burning to land owners and conservationists during a recent tour held in the Mendocino National Forest. ULSIA Chair **Phyllis Lindley** is shown at far left. *(*See *Light My Fire* on page 11.*)*

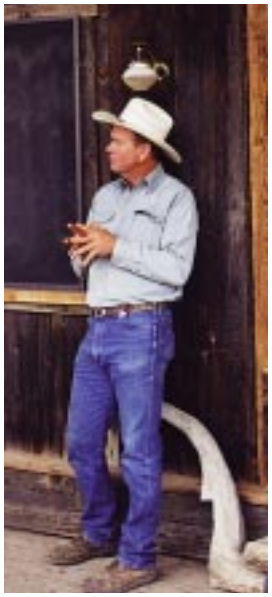
On the cover: *The result of successful riparian restoration efforts, this Glenn County ranch pond is used for flood control, as a reservoir, and as habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.*



District Conservationist **Phill Blake** (above) gives a presentation on stream restoration techniques to the Yountville Town Council. (See *Locals on the Move* on page 13.)

Shown upper left, NRCS Air Quality Coordinator **John Beyer** thinks air quality conservation standards may need much more specificity than most conservation plans overseen by NRCS. *(*See *Airing Our Problems* on page 5.)

Below, conservation guru **Chet Vogt** has achieved outstanding success using conservation practices such as perennial plantings, rotational grazing, and wildlife-friendly fencing. (See *Resourceful Rancher...* on page 10.)



Left, **Kerry Arroues** measures soil salinity with a salinity meter. By keeping current with developing technology NRCS staff can better serve our customers. (See *Enhancing Our Technical Capability* on page 7.)

Questions, comments, and contributions may be forwarded to:
Current Developments
NRCS Office of Public Affairs
430 G Street #4164, Davis, California 95616.
Phone (530) 792-5644 or fax (530) 792-5791

Visit our web site! <www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/pa/pa.html>

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS STAFF

SEPTEMBER 1999

Editor: Anita Brown
Layout/Design: Dave Sanden
Editorial Assistance: Dave Sanden
Photocopying: Jon Jay

A Message from Jeff

It's been a busy summer for me-and I know from talking with many of you that it has been for you too. One opportunity I have particularly enjoyed has been travelling to each of the cluster meetings around the state. These clusters, reflecting our new organizational structure, have been a great forum for visiting with many of you in smaller group settings. I've very much enjoyed the candid exchanges on a more personal level, sharing the vision we all have for our Agency.

One of the visions we have shaped together is focusing our conservation work around the four statewide initiatives reflected here in this issue of Current Developments. (Workload Analysis was a fifth initiative that has now been completed and is being incorporated into action plans.) These initiatives were first selected from a large field of possibilities by the management team last fall, but they were really given their structure and polish through the input of everyone at our All Employees Meeting in San Diego-and by the field and partner contributions made by many of you who worked on the Initiative Teams.

The initiatives-Air Quality, Stream Corridor Restoration, Locally Led Conservation and Enhanced Technical Capability-are not really new activities. Rather, they are an effort to give renewed attention and resources to topics that in many ways cut across the boundaries of all of our conservation activities here in California. I think that as you read the enclosed stories you will see what I mean. For example, the new stream team works (as the name implies) on stream restoration, but the team also reflects our dedication to stay current on needed technical capability (including areas such as landscape ecology and geomorphology), and most of their projects have surfaced from locally led efforts.

Another significant set of new hires has been in the arena of soil survey. In order to complete this vital natural resource knowledge base, we have assertively developed a strategy for completing surveys on private lands in California by 2005. In the past several months we have hired six new soil scientists to help us achieve this technical capability goal.

Similarly, many of the components of the new field structure I recently relayed to you at the cluster meetings developed from components of the initiatives: The clusters and their Boards of Directors mirror locally developed CARCD boundaries; the need for area technical services closer to field locations (with supporting data from the workload analysis) answers a concern surfaced in the technical capability initiative.

Despite the already-hefty size of this newsletter, I know there are many other Initiative stories that deserve telling. Please work with your local RCD, media and the Public Affairs folks to continue telling these stories. For our voluntary method of conservation, spreading success stories may be the best method we have for growing more successes.

Maintaining our focus, spirit and resolve depends on the continued strong and positive commitment of each of you. Thank you for that commitment as we move into a new year of great conservation successes.

Air Quality

Airing Our Problems

By
Anita K. Brown, State Communications Director, Davis SO

You could blame it on the mountains. Industry, agriculture and 35 million people leave their respective pollutants in California's air and then the Sierra Nevada refuse to let the problem blow away. Consequently, three of the five serious non attainment areas in the entire country are found here in the Golden (or is that just plain *brown*?) State. Washington and Texas share the dubious honor.

California's three serious nonattainment areas are found in the San Joaquin Valley, the South Coast, and the Owens Valley. The Owens Valley's huge dry lake bed is that area's source of substantial dust. And for the South Coast the issue is mostly 9 million automobiles, although agriculture has adopted a strategy to address their small piece of the pollution puzzle (see "Winds of Change..."). In the San Joaquin Valley, there are many contributors, including agriculture.

Researching the Problem

"First of all we need definitive data on exactly what *are* the sources of fugitive dust in the Valley," says **John Beyer**, NRCS Air Quality coordinator. "What, for example, is the role of ammonia and methane coming from dairies?—Or of dust associated with almond production?" The University of California expects to publish some of the needed research by the end of the year, but it may be 2002 or later before it all is completed.

The EPA and the California Air Quality Control Board are requiring all "high risk farmers" in the San Joaquin Valley to have a conservation plan by 2005. Almonds, cotton and farm roads are commonly assumed to be the most likely contributors to air pollution in the Valley.

Involve the Players in the Planning

While the researchers are plugging away on detailing the sources of the problem, Beyer has been networking intensively with those most closely involved in the issue: the almond and cotton industries, the UC Extension Service, government agency personnel and many private growers. "When the research is finally ready, we want the proper connections to be in place to make use of the information," he says.

Another part of the NRCS strategy is to have farmer chat sessions to discuss which Best Management Practices seem to be making a difference in operations. "We can learn a lot by combining practical anecdotal information with university research in order to develop the practices that work and are reasonable," says Beyer.

Beyer notes that air quality conservation standards may need much more specificity than most conservation plans overseen by NRCS. "It could be important to detail things as specific as the size of the prunings, the type of equipment needed to do a practice and exactly how to prepare seed beds," he warned. "It's likely to be more detailed than we usually need to be."

Non-attainment vs. serious non-attainment

How does a region get labeled as a serious non-attainment area for air quality? First, the air fails to reach standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Air Act. Second, the plan established to address the issue is determined to be inadequate to improve the air quality problem. So non-attainment areas—including California's Imperial and Sacramento Valleys—could slip into the less desirable designation if their plans to improve do not materialize as anticipated.

Burning, a time honored means of getting rid of wastes, has a drawback–it can add particulates and contaminates to the air.

The High Sierra Resource Conservation & Development area has studied and is promoting novel ways of using rice straw, which has been traditionally burned out of fields. RC&D Coordinator **Bob Roan** shares these suggestions for using rice straw:

- Bedding for horses and other livestock–clean, comfortable, dust-free and cheaper than the traditional wood shavings
- Mulch on construction sites and burned areas–long lasting and free of noxious weeds
- Compost–mix with chicken waste and voila!
- Construction Material–think of rice straw bales as building blocks. They can make sheds or storage units and have a good insulating capacity to boot.

In rice country, part of the plan for escaping the "serious non attainment" tag is to gradually phase out rice straw burning.

"Rice farmers are coming up with a lot of alternatives to burning their rice stubble", says Willows District Conservationist **Dennis Nay**. While some innovative uses have been made of rice straw—including cogeneration and even a project by the High Sierra RC&D that uses rice straw to make small buildings—Nay says that most of the stubble is flooded and decomposed on site. Rice growers ARE coming up with solutions because they don't have a choice, he says.

But as rice farmers do their part to protect air quality there is at least one wrinkle in smoothing the air quality dilemma in the upper watershed. "Northern California also has a big challenge to managing fuel loads—and there are few alternatives to removing overgrown brush. Most of the alternatives to burning will have their own economic and/or environmental problems. It will be a challenge to solve one problem without creating an ecological disturbance elsewhere in the system," he predicts.

The ecological puzzles to managing healthy farms and ranches never cease to evolve. Helping growers meet the challenge proactively and voluntarily continues to be the NRCS goal.

Why is NRCS tackling air quality?

- Human Health: Very small (10 microns or less) particles—as well as hitchhiking contaminants—can lodge in our lungs permanently irritating respiratory tissue and causing or aggravating disease. Children, the elderly and the ill are especially vulnerable.
- Pending regulations, tied to these health issues, will soon require agricultural producers in the San Joaquin Valley to have air quality plans. By getting involved now, NRCS can help negotiate management standards that work *and* that involve the best ideas of the agricultural community.
- Dust and other air pollutants can interfere with production, causing mite problems and lower photosynthesis.
- Soil, water, ***air***, plants and animals

Winds of Change Touch South Coast Farmers

By Anita K. Brown, State Public Affairs Director, Davis SO

Think coastal southern California. Images appear of beaches, Disneyland, movie stars, traffic, air pollution... and farms. Farms? "Yes, we do have farms here in Orange County," says **Marty Leavitt**, President of the South Coast Resource Conservation and Development area.

"Their days may be numbered but while they are here we want to help them survive and stimulate the urban sector to view them as the resource they are."

Part of the RC&D's plan involved putting together literature and workshops on air quality—a project funded by a 1998 EQIP education grant—on how producers can handle dust on their farms and sidestep additional regulation. On June 8 the RC&D held a workshop at the Orange County Farm Bureau for a capacity audience of nursery and strawberry farmers and agency staff.

"Farms are not our major air quality focus," says **Dr. Julia Lester** of the South Coast Air Quality Management District. "Obviously the nine million vehicles in the basin are a much bigger concern." Nevertheless, farms are shown to add five percent of the fugitive dust to the total mix and we need to include them in our overall plan, she added.

The strategy put forth by the SCAQMD will allow farmers to remain exempt from air quality regulation if they followed a straightforward self-monitoring plan for addressing potential sources of air pollution.

The workshop introduced the practices being proferred as possible management components of the self-monitoring plans. These practices were generated through a local work group working with NRCS, Farm Bureau and other agencies.

"Adopt the practices that work for you, keep your plan somewhere accessible on your farm—and chances are we will never visit your farm unless someone registers a concern," Lester told the audience.

The plan calls for adopting one or two practices from a list of options for six different categories. For example, storage piles must be prevented from becoming dust sources by any one of four possible practices: sheltering the pile with a three-sided structure, keeping it watered, chemically stabilizing it or covering it with a tarp.

"This is pretty simple after all," said one nursery farmer from San Juan Capistrano. "I'm fairly sure this will amount to nothing more than documenting what I'm already doing."

"Our South Coast farmers are so used to urban controls that they are already practicing 'good neighbor management' and that pretty much amounts to good air quality management," said South Coast RC&D Coordinator **Ed Umbach**.

Let's Talk Trash

During the 1999 Air Quality Show, Soil Conservationist ***Joe Williams*** *explains how this tomato plant is likely to do just fine, thank you, despite its "trashy" origins. Planting in residue saves the air from the smoke associated with burning and adds organic matter to the soil, he explains.*

If you can't burn 'em, mulch 'em–is the strategy displayed at one of the several stations of the 1999 Air Quality Show, held this year at the PMC.

Enhancing Our Technical Capability

By
Paul C. Laustsen, Visual Information Assistant, Davis SO

To better serve our clients, NRCS in California is implementing a strategy to enhance technical capability. The initiative is directed at keeping current with rapidly developing technology and technical issues. State Conservationist **Jeff Vonk** appointed **Hank Wyman** and **J.R. Flores** to head up a Strategic Initiative Management Team to address the issues.

The team members identified the following five major challenges in NRCS technical capability:

1. Technology Transfer –Providing technology and update information to the field in the most efficient way
2. Oversight–Improving technical review and consistency in NRCS programs
3. Partnerships–Strengthening the relationship among NRCS, RCDs and other partners by providing them with access to new technology tools and training.
4. Training– Improving technical training, especially in conservation planning and related areas.
5. Personnel and Staffing-Developing a strategy to place technical personnel at needed locations.

Working from these issues, the team developed an action plan and invited input from employees during the All Employees Meeting in San Diego last January.

So far the State Technical Initiative has accelerated and complemented ongoing actions and added some new ones as well. Some of the early results are listed here.

I. State Technical Specialist Directory. State Technology Coordinator **Helen Flach** is updating and reissuing this list that clearly matches NRCS specialists with various program and technical knowledge needs. This action was listed by the team as needed to clarify who to contact for various technical needs. Watch for the update on Oct. 1.

Continued on page 20

Conservation Planning Teams

As part of the Technology Enhancement effort, employees from each Area took part in a conservation planning exercise at the PMC. A team from each Area met with PMC Manager **Dave Dyer** to update the conservation plan. Practices covered included dust control, wetland development, and grassed waterways.

Most of the participants were planners with little planning experience. Each team had an experienced planner as team leader. One employee from each of the Integrated Waste Management Board, State Water Resource Control Board, and the Air Resources Board participated in the planning exercise. The final plan will be presented to Dyer in early October.

Conservation Planning Participants: ***Chris Davis*** *(not shown),* ***Bob Loveland****,* ***Gary Bullard****,* ***Erik Beardsley****,* ***David Sims****,* ***Pat Paswater****,* ***Alfred Ramos****,* ***Hue Dang****,* ***Allison Bettencourt****,* ***Brent Shumacher****,* ***Dick McCleery****,* ***Sharon Boyce****,* ***Judy Padilla****,* ***Nigh Diep****,* ***Rita Bickel****,* ***Kristen Kieta-Farrand****,* ***Sally Negroni****,* ***Jae Lee****,* ***John White****,* ***Carolyn Lofresco****,* ***Joe Williams****,* ***Jon Collins****, and* ***Paul Nguyen****.*

Stream Corridor Restoration

Renewing Our Commitment

By
Julia Grim, State Geologist, Davis SO

As the lifeblood of our watersheds, California's rivers and streams bear a heavy burden. All Californians rely to some degree on stream systems to safely convey stormflows and sediment, support fish and wildlife, provide aggregate for construction, offer recreational and aesthetic opportunities, and even generate some of our electricity. In addition, we rely on our rivers and streams to collect, store, and distribute a sufficient volume of clean water for use in food and fiber production, manufacturing, and domestic consumption. With such a load to bear, it should be no surprise, then, that most of our rivers and streams are out of balance, and that they deserve a little more attention, understanding, and care.

Installed tree stumps help to maintain meanders along Cold Creek, near Lake Tahoe.

The Stream Corridor Restoration Initiative is our renewed commitment to lead action towards locally-led efforts to "restore" rivers and streams. The beauty– and the challenge – of emphasizing stream restoration, is that so much of what we already do qualifies as (or at least contributes towards) "stream restoration." Examples include helping individuals and groups develop range management and/or watershed plans, participating in local trash pick-up days along urban rivers, planting willows along eroding banks, constructing sediment ponds that help keep excess sediment out of the system, and cost-sharing on easements that give rivers a little more "wiggle room."

*The Tule Pond project helps to control water pollution (*see *Snieckus Receives Award...* in *Caligrams).*

Paraphrasing from the recently distributed and award-winning Stream Corridor Restoration Manual (NEH, Part 653), stream restoration activities "emphasize the maintenance and restoration of the ecological integrity and the dynamic stability of the stream corridor by focusing on multiple scales, functions, and values."

The Tule Pond Wetlands Restoration Project in Alameda County, and the Cold Creek Stream Restoration Project in the Lake Tahoe Basin (see photos) are just two examples of NRCS efforts to help local groups restore the physical and ecological health of their streams. The Upper Stony Watershed Project (see this issue, pages 9-11) is also an excellent example of watershed work that has resulted in improved stream health and function.

Let us share your stream restoration success story with others; we welcome your stories, photos, and updates. Contact Julia at <julia.grim@ca.usda.gov> for more information.

Stream Teams

Stream Teams will assist in the planning and implementation of stream restoration projects. Team members are experienced professionals who can analyze stream corridors, develop and implement restoration designs, and evaluate the results. In Area 1, the team consists of Fisheries Biologist **Tim Viel**, Landscape Ecologist **Ann Francis**, and Stream Mechanics Engineer **Tom Benson**. The Central Coast team, consists of Resource Conservationists **Glen Wilcox** and **Rita Bickel** and Civil Engineer **Doug Toews**.

Upper Stony Creek: A Watershed Approach

By
Dave Sanden, Writer-Editor, Davis SO

Streams evolve in concert with their surrounding ecosystems, and changes in the surrounding ecosystems affect natural processes within stream corridors. Negative changes can destroy streams' dynamic equilibrium, often resulting in more negative changes to the surrounding ecosystem.

Because of the interconnectedness of streams and their surrounding ecosystems, and because disturbances commonly come from many sources, stream restoration requires a broad range of measures to return the stream corridor to a self-sustaining dynamic equilibrium. In short, it takes a watershed approach.

NRCS has achieved outstanding success using a watershed approach for stream restoration in California. An excellent example is the Upper Stony Creek Watershed project, which began in the summer of 1989.

Located 120 miles north of San Francisco on the eastern side of California's Inner Coast Range within Glenn and Colusa Counties, the Upper Stony Creek Watershed averages 25 miles in length and 15 miles in width. It includes 243,200 acres, much within the Medocino National Forest. About a third of the acreage, mostly the eastern part of the watershed, is privately owned. These private lands comprise the project area.

Watershed Problems

In the late 1970's, concerns were raised about the condition of natural resources in the watershed. Climate, land use, and fire suppression had combined with characteristics of the vegetation to produce interrelated problems that affected stream health. Soil erosion and compaction were causing downstream sedimentation and increased runoff from uplands. Plant diversity and productivity were declining, wildlife habitat was deteriorating, and wildlife species and populations were decreasing. Brushlands held excessive fuel loads, creating an environment susceptible to catastrophic wild fires.

In 1989 a watershed team evaluated the problems and planned solutions. Using the PL-566 Program, cost-share incentives were funded for land treatment and technical assistance measures such as range seedings, road renovation, fencing, reservoir development, and grade stabilization. Additional land treatment measures that have been used are prescribed burning, range seeding, channel revegetation, and deferred grazing.

Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) projects also have been an important factor in stream restoration within the Upper Stony Creek Watershed. Operating at the local level, the CRMP process allows those who live and work within the watershed to develop plans for restoration and conservation efforts.

The articles on the next two pages highlight some of the outstanding successes resulting from the Upper Stony Creek Watershed Project.

The Measure of Success

Some of the accomplishments of the Upper Stony Creek Project after ten years:

- Deferred grazing on 19,769 acres
- Managed grazing on 33, 950 acres
- Conducted over 40 educational workshops
- Developed more than 32 long-term conservation plans and contracts on private land
- Conducted prescribed burning on 1,860 acres
- Installed more than 35 miles of permanent electric fence
- Installed more than 20 miles of barbed wire fence
- Installed more than 4 miles of woven wire fence
- Established 9 miles of firebreaks
- Installed 12 miles of livestock pipeline
- Installed 34 water storage tanks (averaging 4,000 gallons)
- Established 59 watering troughs for livestock and wildlife
- Planted 1,047 acres with annual grass and clover species
- Planted 894 acres with perennial grass species
- Reconstructed 14 miles of access roads
- Drilled 3 vertical wells for livestock use
- Developed or improved 12 springs
- Created or improved 8 ponds
- Created 9 riparian pastures
- Provided $600,770 of NRCS funds
- Provided more than $300,380 of landowner funds
- First project using land treatment only
- First project to have education as a key element.

Resourceful Rancher Restoring Riparian Regions

By
Dave Sanden, Writer-Editor, Davis SO

The first thing to impress a visitor to **Chet Vogt's** ranch in the Upper Stony Watershed might be the abundance of wildlife. The second thing might be the apparent absence of cattle.

Actually, there is a large cattle herd on the 5,000-acre ranch. Unlike cattle on other ranches in the area, however, Vogt's cattle don't graze freely.

Prior to Vogt's acquisition of the ranch property in 1992, over grazing had nearly rendered the land useless. Grass production was low, riparian areas were fallow, and wildlife habitat was almost nonexistent. Erosion and compaction also were severe problems. Nevertheless, Vogt purchased the nonirrigated land seven years ago and began a daring experiment by putting his innovative grazing plan into effect.

Through the assistance of NRCS and other agencies, Vogt fenced the ranch into 30 paddocks where cattle graze only a few days before moving to another. The grass in each paddock has nearly a year to rest and regenerate. "All the land is used, but not for long," says Vogt.

The cattle are not herded but instead are trained to leave the paddock for a new one following a whistle call. "The paddock method is more labor intensive, but the hoof action of the cattle helps with reseeding," Vogt says. "The cattle stay longer in sacrifice paddocks to allow other areas more recovery time."

In open grazing, cattle eat the choicest grass first and then move on to the next area of good grass, leaving only undesirable grasses behind. "Scatter grazing is harmful, but it's the cheapest way," said District Conservationist **Dennis Nay**. "Perennial grasses need rest. Grouping and moving the cattle is better for the grass."

"Perennial grass roots intercept more rainfall, which is good for the watershed," Nay said. "Keeping more water in the ground means more money for the landowner."

*Rancher **Chet Vogt** (left) listens intently as District Conservationist **Dennis Nay** explains Vogt's innovative fencing system to ranch visitors.*

The cattle have no direct access to the creeks or fenced-off stock ponds, and all riparian areas and ponds are grazed only twice a year. Because there is no electric power on the ranch to run pumps, water is piped to troughs through siphon tubes using gravity flow. "Cows need lots of water," said Vogt. "Siphon tubes bring the water in, recharging the 5,000 gallon storage tanks every night. This keeps the cattle out of the creek."

With Vogt's riparian renovation, desirable grasses have come back, birds and other wildlife are plentiful on the acreage, erosion problems have been addressed, and the water is clean.

"Birds are an indicator of the land's condition, and so is the grass," says Vogt. "When I first came here, there weren't any birds–no tweet tweet sounds–only an overpowering silence. Likewise, all of the native perennial grasses were gone. Now there are lots of birds, and the perennial grasses have returned."

Vogt's experiment continues, and Vogt spends much of his time sharing what he's learned (and is still learning) with fellow ranchers and others.

"Public funds allowed me to do what I would have done anyway, but without them it would have taken 20 to 30 years," said Vogt.

Working cooperatively Vogt's restoration has taken just six seasons.

Light My Fire

By Dave Sanden, Writer-Editor, Davis SO

The Upper Little Stony Creek Watershed includes parts of the Mendocino National Forest as well as private lands. Situated within a heavily forested area, local landowners face problems quite different from their neighbors' in the lower watershed.

One of the greatest threats to water quality and stream health (and to the landowners's themselves) is catastrophic wildfire. Loss of vegetation after a fire leads to increased runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. In extreme cases, catastrophic fires can cause heavy debris flows as well.

Fate and fire suppression efforts have left much of the forest and underbrush unburned for a very long time. Some areas have not burned for nearly 200 years, resulting in an excessive fuel load that quietly waits for the spark that will ignite a major conflagration.

Greatly concerned about this potential for disaster, a few of the Upper Stony Creek landowners came together in 1994 to discuss the problem and form a plan of action. Timber and other resources issues were also discussed.

The landowners agreed to form an inholder group to acquire a greater voice in the management of their watershed. **Phyllis Lindley** was elected to chair the group of 16 landowners, thereafter known as Upper Little Stony Inholders Alliance (ULSIA).

ULSIA members were convinced that prescribed understory burning and other fuel load treatment were needed. Only the Forest Service had the necessary expertise and equipment for such a dangerous operation, but they work on public lands. Funding was also a critical consideration. What to do?

The solution came in the form of a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) carried out by a partnership consisting of the Mendocino National Forest, NRCS, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), California Department of Fish and Game, Colusa Board of Supervisors, Colusa County RCD, Colusa County Area Resources Board, and ULSIA.

Photo by Jim Snyder

Using a strip-fire technique in understory burning lowers heat intensity, helping to prevent unwanted damage.

In the Spring of 1996, CDF awarded the Colusa County RCD $20,000 for a nonindustrial timber management plan (NTMP) for the private lands (ULSIA) in the watershed. The funds were allocated to the Forest Service for the job.

Working in close proximity to homes and roads, the burns were carefully conducted under ideal conditions. The results far surpassed the most optimistic expectations in terms of percent of duff layer remaining, tree mortality, and visual impact. Few trees were lost, and no private property was damaged.

Although the burning caused some temporary air pollution, the landowners think the accrued benefits were well worth it.

"There's no perfect solution," said ULSIA Board member and Colusa County RCD Director **Gary Evans**. "The timber industry would like to harvest everything, but this leads to stream turbidity and dirty water. Burning leads to dirty air. You can't have it all. But if you let the fire occur on its own terms, in August or July in low humidity, you'll have dirty air, everything burned to the ground, erosion, and dirty water."

"Understory burning is extremely cost effective," Evans said. "It only costs $135 per acre to prevent wildfires versus $1,350 per acre to fight them."

About 60 acres have been burned so far. The outstanding success of the project has generated much interest among other landowners in the watershed who were at first very reluctant.

If I Had a Hammer...

By Michael House, Editorial Assistant, Davis SO

The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996—the '96 Farm Bill—was passed in part to correct the emphases of the '85 and '90 Farm Bills. The traditional SCS approach to conservation, using local conservation districts to set priorities, had been overridden by national priorities in the '85 and '90 bills and others. This resulted in a 'top-down' approach. With the '96 Farm Bill, Congress directed NRCS to return to using local people to identify conservation needs. RCDs convene the groups to bring together diverse stakeholders and make sure that all concerns are heard and general buy-in is achieved. For example, the Forest Service's Quincy Library Group has succeeded in constructing alternative solutions to environmental problems by balancing conflicting interests and then forging a consensus.

The analogy that best describes the locally led process is the 'toolbox.' Local communities, through the leadership of RCDs, identify the problems and the goals they would like to achieve. They then turn to the 'conservation toolbox' to see what tool fits the task. For some, technical assistance is the primary need; for others, specific financial assistance is needed.

The local work groups (LWG) do not necessarily conform to county lines, they may be defined by watershed boundaries or other resource-related criteria. The areas defined are called Geographic Priority Areas (GPAs). Much of this process was framed around the EQIP program, but is not only used for EQIP. Each LWG completes a planning process to define their conservation needs, then seeks needed funding or staff, either from USDA programs, other public, and/or private sources that provide financial assistance. This process offers an efficient approach to problem solving since each community is more easily able to identify their own needs. NRCS and the environment realize a benefit if our assistance can leverage other private and public funds. Finally, local groups also make it easier to draw media attention for NRCS and conservation generally.

The initiative committee, led by **Helen Flach** and **Lin Brooks**, is **David Howell**, **John James** (El Dorado Co. RCD), **Margy Lindquist**, **Dennis Moore**, **Sharon Nance**, **Ernst Pashke**, **Larry Soenen** and **Susan Tharp**. They promote the process statewide at RCD, county board, and stakeholder meetings. Training, websites, and brochures are being planned.

LWG funding proposals received at NRCS are input into the Online Proposal System (OLPS) which eases their evaluation, and can be useful for reporting and spotting trends. Data from the OLPS has been used to generate maps that show where LWGs have identified specific problems. These maps are shared with other agencies that have available funds and are looking for areas where local people have organized themselves to address the problems and are ready, willing, and able to begin.

THE TOOLBOX

Some Resources Available to Locally Led Groups

CDF FIP
CTS
CalFed
Coastal Conservancy
County funds
EPA 319
EQIP
FIP
FPE
FPP
FWS Partners for Wildlife
Foundation Grants
PL-566
Private Funding
Soil Survey
Plant Materials
UCD SARE
USFS SIP
WHIP
WRP

Locals on the Move
Driving Conservation Bandwagon

By Michael House, Editorial Assistant, Davis SO

People everywhere are concerned about their environment. From Del Norte to Imperial, citizens are waking up and taking charge of their lives and their surroundings. NRCS is helping citizens to organize, plan, and work together to put conservation on the ground. This article focuses on only four of the many successes in the movement.

ALHAMBRA CREEK WATERSHED

In 1995 the Environmental Alliance, a non-profit group in Contra Costa County, approached the Contra Costa County RCD with a proposal to create a watershed management plan for the Alhambra Creek Watershed, which includes the famous John Muir House. With CRMP process help from Concord SC's **Larry Soenen** and the CCRCD's **Tom Brumleve**, the Alhambra Creek Watershed Planning Committee was created. Mailing over seven thousand invitations to area landowners drew over 100 active volunteers, from which emerged 32 volunteer committee members. Stakeholders, from the Cattlemen's Association to the Urban Creeks Council, including individual landowners, are represented. This diverse group of differing resource interests ensured the public buy-in.

Committee members hit the field to learn proper stream function in the Alhambra Creek Watershed.

Concerned about annual flooding, the committee identified soil erosion, urban development, and an unhealthy creek ecosystem as problems also. Three start-up grants were obtained: one for GIS, one to tie into the Contra Costa Clean Water plan, and $5000 to hire a coordinator. These were soon followed by a $138,000 CalFed grant to continue the committee and coordinator's work. The same CRMP process has netted a $58,000 Equine Owner Outreach grant for the RCD.

Sue Worley, the new coordinator, notes "We just finished our presentation to the county board of supervisors. I am pleased it was well received. The weekly articles on our process I have been submitting to the *Martinez Gazette*, the *Contra Costa Times*, and the *Martinez Record* might have helped this." An additional $400,000 in grants will be available to the committee upon completion of the planning process.

The GIS and other detailed research needed is nearly wrapped up with assistance from **Robyn Myers**, NRCS landscape ecologist, and **Nancy Stein**, the resource conservationists with CCRCD. Robyn notes "If you hurry, you can still see the Alhambra website at *www.ca.nrcs.usga.gov/wps/alhambra.html* before it migrates to the RCD."

NAPA COUNTY WATERSHED

District Conservationist **Phill Blake** reports that the Napa River Watershed Task Force and the Napa Co. RCD received exciting news from Napa County regarding their award of $100,000. The task force, originally organized through the request of **State Senator (**now Congressman) **Mike Thompson** and the

"What? You're going to plant more grapevines?" Napa Valley problems increase with the many new acres converted to agricultural uses.

county board of supervisors, met last winter and spring to develop studies and policy recommendations on dealing with the rapid expansion of agricultural lands in the watershed. The supervisors appointed Blake and RCD Resource Conservationist **Dennis Bowker** to work with 15 representatives from agricultural, urban, and environmental interests.

The task force has favorably impacted the reimbursable funding for the Napa Co. RCD's local Conservation

NAVARRO RIVER WATERSHED

The Conservancy specifically discussed ... coordination between the voluntary response and the regulatory response...

The locally led process is alive and well and helping landowners conserve soil and water in the Mendocino County's Navarro River watershed. **Tom Schott**, District Conservationist at the Ukiah Service Center, and **Chuck Crane**, the Mendocino County RCD Director, recently were awarded a $200,000 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy to develop implementation projects based on the Navarro River Watershed Restoration Plan.

The **local work group**, comprised of Navarro agricultural interests (vineyard, orchard and livestock), timber owners, environmental groups, schools, and agencies helped to develop the restoration plan. The plan focuses on coho salmon and steelhead trout habitat restoration in addition to water quality improvement for the 200,000 acre coastal watershed. The group's proposals also won funding from EQIP and the California Department of Fish and Game. The RCD plans to hire LWG organizer and restoration specialist **Dick Jordan** to develop projects, do educational workshops, and develop a monitoring program.

***Chuck Crayne**, Mendocino County. RCD, and Navarro Creek landowner evaluate their cabled tree and willow stake project.*

Schott says, "The partnership between the District and the Conservancy has been strengthened in the Navarro area. We look forward to designing some projects and getting the environmental documentation cleared up so the landowners won't have to worry about that."

The Conservancy raised questions at the hearing about monitoring, concerned that the LWG collect data not just in pre- and post- project monitoring, but also at the watershed assessment level. The Conservancy required this watershed-level data examined for trends and conditions to ensure movement toward water quality and fishery goals. The Conservancy specifically discussed coordination between the LWG's voluntary response and the regulatory response, because of all the investment being made in restoration, TMDL, and forest practice inspection.

Crayne argued, "Although regulation establishes a baseline to prevent problems on private land, it doesn't encourage owners to deal with the legacy of problems in a proactive manner. Our voluntary approach builds on and extends the basic level set by regulation." Schott concluded, "Because of the cooperative nature of our project, we stress outreach, education and project demonstration to build community ownership in achieving watershed improvement results." This helped convince the Conservancy to award the grant.

MARIN COASTAL WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

District Conservationist **Charlette Sanders'** ranchers above Point Reyes created their own range plans to reduce siltation that was killing the oyster beds below. The project won a CF Industries national award.

Sanders says, "Our local work group actually went through two stages. **Stephanie Larsen,** the UC Cooperative Extension Agent, the Marin County RCD, and I had organized a small group of ranchers and local agricultural interests, dealing mainly with sediment erosion and ammonia. We ran "Create Your Own Range Plan" workshops with a small grant from the Marin Agricultural Land Trust in conjunction with the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. The results we generated attracted the attention of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin and the Marin Coastal Watershed Enhancement Project, which was in the process of being formed."

Drawing A Crowd. NRCS and the UC Cooperative Extension hold one of many conservation planning workshops.

The group grew to include the county board of supervisors, Trout Unlimited, various local environmental action groups, Western United Dairymen, oyster growers, Representative Lynn Woolsey, Marin County Farm Bureau, The Gulf of the Farallones, The National Marine Sanctuary, Prunuske Chatham Consultants, urban and rural landowners, and individuals. The new Watershed Enhancement Project, funded with a $100,000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation, tackled coliform bacteria contamination in the water, among other problems.

With a little work from everyone, the oyster beds off Point Reyes are producing again.

*No One Balked! **Nancy Scolari**, UC Cooperative Extension (now with Marin RCD), leads ranchers through the steps of an ammonia monitoring program.*

Locally Led Throughout the State

Since NRCS commonly coordinates with private landowners, we have examples throughout the state.

District Conservationist **Ernie Paschke's** Yuba City Firesafe Council used an EQIP grant to leverage a large Prop 203 grant to work in the foothills on innovative ways to reduce underbrush. Paschke says "The RCD, local volunteer firefighters, and concerned landowners led the way on the Firesafe Council."

District Conservationist **Jeffrey Rodriguez'** Santa Clara Water Basin Initiative is using the CRMP process to develop a water quality plan and prioritize issues. Stakeholders are meeting to discuss uses of landuse and stream corridor management.

District Conservationist **Al Cerna's** Water Quality Protection Program/Agricultural Plan is the product of several years of multi-agency and public input into defining water quality problems in the watersheds of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Coordinated by NOAA, the plan incorporates the concerns of the environmental and farming communities. On-farm implementation of several pilot projects is being conducted by local farm bureaus and will build on NRCS conservation practices.

The South Coast RC&D has used its EQIP education grant to create the South Coast Ecosystem Enhancement Project, according to Director **Ed Umbach**. The LWG saw that the NRCS staffing level was insufficient to tailor individual plans to remedy air quality problems arising from agricultural activities. The RC&D's plan for an educational campaign is underway. Three county farm bureaus have joined with key landowners to conduct the campaign to assist farmers in writing their own air quality plans and avoid further regulatory action.

Other success stories are occurring throughout the state. Locally Led Conservation is the wave of the future swelling today.

Caligrams!

Imagine This Writing Contest provides opportunity to Students

By Lisa Bui, Visual Information Assistant, Davis SO

Calling all writers!

The California Foundation for Agriculture In The Classroom (AITC) is sponsoring the 1999-2000 *Imagine This* story writing contest, for students in grades 2 through 8. The contest encourages students to write and learn about the purpose of agriculture in their lives.

The contest provides students with an opportunity to have their work published, to become state winners, and to receive media recognition and a savings bond for their agricultural stories. In addition, teachers of the winning students receive free classroom resources from AITC. The deadline to submit agricultural stories is November 1, 1999. Two winners will be chosen from each category – grades 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8. The winners will be announced in January 2000. All interested teachers should contact AITC at 1(800) 700-AITC for more information and an entry form. Good Luck!

Sustainable Agriculture Grants Available for the year 2000

By Kristen Kelleher

USDA's Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE) program released its calls for proposals for research, education and professional development efforts the first week of July.

SARE grants are for research and education projects that have a whole-systems approach and increase the understanding and adoption of sustainable agriculture. SARE proposals are due at the Western SARE headquarters at Utah State University by 4:00 p.m. MST on September 30, 1999.

Professional Development Program (PDP) grants provide funding for efforts to help Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service and other agricultural professionals expand their knowledge of sustainable agriculture. PDP proposals are due on November 19, 1999, in the PDP office at the University of Wyoming by 4:00 p.m. MST.

Contact Western SARE at (435) 797-2257 or wsare@mendel.usu.edu to add your name to the distribution list for calls for proposals or to request application materials. Calls for proposals are also available on-line at http://wsare.usu.edu.

Tulare County Noxious Weed Tour

By Valerie Thompson, Student Outreach Assistant

Farmers, ranchers, and government officials attended a noxious weed tour in Tulare County on June 22, 1999. A noxious weed task force was recently formed to explore ways of controlling the invasion of weed species, such as the Yellow Starthistle, known to be troublesome, aggressive, intrusive or destructive to agriculture or important native species in Tulare County.

Speakers from NRCS, Tulare County Resource Conservation District, UC Cooperative Extension, Tulare County Ag Commissioner's Office, US Forest Service, Tulare County Cattleman's Association, and Tulare County Farm Bureau informed agencies and landowners about the imposing threat of noxious weeds. **Joe Williams**, chairman of the Noxious Weed Task Force and member of the NRCS field office in Visalia commented, "The tour was a big success today, and it will continue to be one. I believe that with the partnerships of the agencies involved, we will be able to get a firm grasp on the extent of the invasive weeds and how, together, we can control them."

The Visalia Field Office is currently expanding education and awareness of invasive weed species and creating partnerships for the future to reduce the impact of noxious weeds in Tulare County.

Student Employees See How Pieces Fit at SCEP/STEP Workshop

By Lisa Bui, Public Affairs STEP Intern, Davis SO

More than 25 Student Career Educational Program (SCEP) and Student Temporary Educational Program (STEP) students came together at the state office July 6-9 to discover the theme of this year's workshop, "See How The Pieces Fit Together."

The 1999 SCEP/STEP Workshop gave students an opportunity to learn about NRCS and meet key people in our agency. Students became acquainted with mentors and with each other at the poster session and spent a day visiting two farms in Yolo county and the Heidrick Agriculture History Center. In addition, students listened to presentations about specific programs from the State Office, Field Offices, Area Offices, and Partners, gathered at the SCEP/STEP banquet, and explored ethics, civil rights, outreach and administrative issues.

The workshop successfully introduced the students to NRCS and answered many of their questions.

Snieckus Receives Award for Outstanding Wetlands Work

By Lisa Bui, Visual Information Assistant, Davis SO

On July 22, 1999, the American Society of Civil Engineers presented the Golden Gate Branch Outstanding Civil Engineering Project of the year award to NRCS Landscape Architect **Bob Snieckus** and to **Richard Wetzig** of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for their contributions to the Tule Pond wetlands project.

In efforts to improve water quality, enhance the visual resource and create wildlife habitat in an urban area, Snieckus and Earth Team Landscape Architect **Sara Schultz** assisted the district in the design and construction of three ponds adjacent to the Bay Area Rapid Transit Station in Fremont, California.

"I am very honored to receive this award and proud that NRCS is being commended for its technical expertise in urban conservation," Snieckus said. "The Tule Pond project allowed us to demonstrate a different approach for cleaning up stormwater runnoff."

The award was given for the multi-disciplinary, interagency planning efforts and innovative design techniques. The Tule Pond project utilizes simple technology and natural features to control water pollution. The three new ponds provide an inexpensive filtering system that removes toxins from urban storm water runoff. As the runoff passes through each pond, sediment and pollution are removed by gravity, oxygenation, and biological processes. The much cleaner water then drains into San Francisco Bay.

The ponds, along with plantings of native trees, shrubs and grasses are enhancing the natural habitat and attracting diverse wildlife such as waterfowl, raptors, and other animals. Outdoor environmental classrooms and educational programs are currently being developed to teach students about the Tule Pond wetlands.

Photo by Jon Jay

Landscape Architects Bob Snieckus and Sara Shultz standing beside Tule Pond. The ponds control water pollution by filtering storm runoff water and will also serve as an outdoor environmental classroom.

NRCS Signs Liason Agreement with Cal Poly Pomona

From the Cal Poly Pomona Bulletin

Deputy State Conservationist **Henry Wyman** and President **Bob Suzuki** of Cal Poly Pomona signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 1, permitting NRCS to place a full-time liaison officer on the Cal Poly Pomona Campus.

The newly appointed liaison officer will promote programs of mutual interest, including focusing on the recruitment of Asian Pacific Islanders and other minority students for employment within the USDA. The liaison will assist in the development of agriculture and natural resources curricula and in the recruitment of students to Cal Poly Pomona. Also present at the signing from NRCS, were **Joan Perry, Rita Bickel, Aylene Hizon and Gerry Gonzalez.**

Deputy State Conservationist Hank Wyman (right) and President Bob Suzuki sign the MOU for a USDA liason to the Cal Poly Pomona campus.

*Editors note: **Mon Yee**, formerly Natural Resources Manager in Portland, Oregon, is NRCS' Asian Pacific Islander Liaison at Cal Poly Pomona. He started in the new position on Sept. 12.*

California Conservationist Teaches at Nevada Youth Range Camp

By Lisa Bui, Visual Information Assistant, Davis SO

Sandy Higa, District Conservationist at the Alturas Service Center, traveled to Austin, Nevada on June 18 to teach 30 students in the Nevada Youth Range Camp about the land and its resources.

Higa, the camp director, helped students learn about the many aspects of the wildlife environment by rotating students through four site investigations: Forest, Range, Aquatic, and Soil. Students discovered and explored the land by participating in traditional camp activities that included scavenger hunts, fishing, and swimming. Other educational and fun activities, such as a night compass course, wildlife investigations, tour of Snow-Tel, conservation project (the eradication of musk thistle), and a workshop on primitive bow making, filled the nine day trip.

The students gained valuable knowledge about the land and formed lasting friendships.

Continued from page 7

II. The California State Technical Guide This document serves as a technical cornerstone for agency activities and keeping it current is recognized as both vital and extremely time consuming. To address this need, Technical Guide Coordinator **Gary Bullard** is tackling the project on a full-time basis. He is assisted by a cadre of specialists who are aggressively committed to the thorough revitalization and modernization of this tome.

As useful as the FOTG is, members of the team recognize that it can be greatly improved—both in substance and credibility—by opening the document to the scrutiny and input of other agencies. To begin this, a half-day workshop was held in conjunction with a State Technical Committee meeting on June 29. Employees were also invited.

Area Committees are bringing new field concerns forward to be addressed to help the team modernize traditional practices.

III. Field-level Technical Specialists. The Initiative identified the need to more appropriately place technical personnel in locations where they can best be used. This need was noted and adopted as part of the reorganization strategy now championed by State Conservationist Vonk.

IV. Conservation Planning Certification The California team recognized the need for training and certifying qualified conservation planners. Since last winter the team has been developing a process for training and certifying employees to address this need. However, due to an unexplained concurrence of thought between California and the National Office, a new national policy was sent out on July 13 mandating such a certification process. Therefore, the national 9-part training module will be used for this certification process. All district conservationists, soil conservationists, engineers and others who sign conservation plans will need to take the training and obtain the certification. Through this process, NRCS hopes to bolster planning and technical skills and provide technical consistency.

V. Statewide Technical Coordination The role of overseeing and transferring emerging technical issues will enjoy the special attention of three specialists working to assure success in these areas. Assistant State Conservationist (Programs and Technology) **Helen Flach** will serve as the overall State Technical Coordinator. In addition, **John Beyer** has been newly appointed as the State Air Quality "Guru" (see Air Quality Initiative).

On the State Office level, technical coordination among staffs will be coordinated by State Conservation Engineer **Charles Davis**.

Nominations Sought for Steward of the Land Award

American Farmland Trust is now seeking nominations for the $10,000 Steward of the Land Award. Now in its fourth year, the $10,000 Steward of the Land Award goes to the farmer or farm family who demonstrates the strongest commitment toprotecting agricultural land.

Nominees must be living and actively farming in the United States. Preference will be given to individuals who (a) use farming practices that lead to a productive farm in a healthy environment, (b) work to develop policies and programs for farmland protection at the local, state or national levels, and (c) demonstrate leadership by protecting their own farm from development.

Nominations for the 2000 award are due no later than November 1, 1999. Send them to Steward of the Land Award, American Farmland Trust, 1200 18th Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036.

To nominate a farmer, see the $10,000 Steward of the Land Award web site at www.farmland.org/steward/steward.htm. For more information, call (202) 331-7300 x3044

PERSONNEL NOTES...

By Tracy D. McDermott, Admin. Asst., Davis SO

ASTCFO, AREA 4, FEHB, FLSA– if you can explain the meaning of every acronym listed you might consider running for office or working in Human Resources! Staying informed and keeping you informed of all the changes has really kept us moving, in more ways than one.

Taking to the road, **Barbara Foster**, **Kathy Wold**, **Susan Tharp** and **Sharon Bost** have been traveling to the cluster groups to discuss the FLSA changes, (give yourself a point if you knew it meant, Fair Labor Standards Act). They informed employees about the change in Comp time and Overtime eligibility. (Give yourself another point and perhaps a new career path if you can explain all the changes yourself!) Barbara and Susan covered the travel aspects of FLSA and Sharon and Kathy covered the effects of FLSA changes on personnel. If you are wondering why you haven't heard about this, it's because they still have more places to go and people to see!

The FEHB (Federal Employees Health Benefits) will be having an open season November 8 through December 13, 1999. During the open season, you may switch health benefit plans and make other changes not available at other times. If you would like more information about different health benefit plans, a great place to look is on the OPM website at <http://www.opm.gov>.

Have you seen the new Area boundaries? We welcome Area 4 and our new Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations (ASTCFO), **Paul Benedict** and **Curtis Tarver**, effective September 12, 1999. Paul will be located in the Riverside Area Office.

So as the names change, so will the acronyms in our lives.

Until next time...

PERSONNEL CHANGES

NAME	POSITION	ACTION	GRADE	LOCATION	DATE
M. Porter	Soil Consv	Promotion	GS-09	Hanford	4/25/99
D. Hohensee	Soil Scientist	Retirement	GS-09	Arcata SSO	4/30/99
S. Magalong	Admin Asst	Promotion	GS-07	Davis	5/09/99
J. Tvrdevich	Soil Consv Tech	Retirement	GS-07	Alturas	5/31/99
J. Reid	Admin Asst	Retirement	GS-05	Davis	5/21/99
J. Lau	Public Aff Spec	Career Promotion	GS-09	Salinas FO	7/18/99
K. Huff	St Tr Soil Cons	Conv to SCEP	GS-04	Soquel	5/23/99
P. Torres	St Tr Agronomist	SCEP Hire	GS-04	LA UO	6/20/99
A. Casey	St Tr Range	SCEP Hire	GS-04	Red Bluff	6/06/99
C. Lindsey	St Tr Soil Cons	SCEP Hire	GS-04	Templeton	5/23/99
E. Palmer	St Tr Biology	SCEP Hire	GS-04	Salinas AO	6/20/99
C. Dreps	Ag Engineer	New Hire	GS-09	Stockton FO	6/20/99
L. Ortiz	Ag Engineer	New Hire	GS-07	Concord FO	6/06/99
J. Berman	Soil Scientist	Reassignment	GS-07	Arcata SSO	7/04/99
D. Mountjoy	Res Consv	Promotion	GS-12	Salinas AO	5/23/99
K. Fullen	Biologist	Career Promotion	GS-11	Sacramento	7/01/99
J. Gustafson	Range Cons	Career Promotion	GS-09	Petaluma	8/01/99
K. Green	St Tr Soil Cons	SCEP Hire	GS-04	Stockton	6/20/99
J. Padilla	Soil Cons	Resignation	GS-07	Bakersfield	6/28/99
J. Ryder	Resource Cons	Reassignment	GS-11	Fresno	6/20/99
D. Dowling	Soil Cons Tech	Career Promotion	GS-07	Salinas FO	6/20/99
D. Holcomb	St Resource Cons	Promotion	GS-14	Davis	6/20/99
J. Whan Ag	Engineer	Career Promotion	GS-09	Bakersfield	8/15/99
B. Eisenman	District Cons	Promotion	GS-12	Hollister	8/01/99
A. Bettencourt	Soil Consv	Career Promotion	GS-09	Grass Valley	8/15/99
Q. Tran Ag	Engineer	Career Promotion	GS-09	Modesto	8/29/99
A. Francis	Landscape Eco	New Hire	GS-09	Alturas	8/15/99

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS *in* California

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
430 G Street
Davis, California 95616